1: Bowen C-4 (1945-1947) 1951 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK2

228 The captain watches the whole procedure closely to see that no pearls are secreted; when the last oyster is opened, he collects all the pearls, ties them in a small red cotton flannel cloth, and puts them in his sea chest on the poop deck.

The Persian Gulf procedure for opening the oysters is in vivid contrast to the practice of some of the other pearl fisheries. In Ceylon, for example, all the oysters for any one day are brought into the yards of the company holding the concession to the banks. Each diver carries his own oysters up to the stockaded compound where he divides them into three piles. The company inspector comes around and tells the diver which pile he can take; when he leaves the compound he has to give back a portion to his attendant and to the captain of the boat.

There is evidence that some such practice may have been carried out along the Arabian coast in the past. A century ago the pearlers of the Trucial Coast opened their oysters on land, for Whitelock relates that the pearlers remained at sea until they had a boatload of oysters and then proceeded to the nearest island to open the shells.[22]

228 172 During medieval times the Arabians on the mainland controlled Bahrein Island; their capital was at Hofuf. Huge heaps of oyster shells, some a hundred yards long, stretch along the shore a mile south of al-Khobar. Nearby have been found grinding pestles, stone diving weights, and crude pottery fragments. The species of oyster in these mounds is the same small variety commonly found today. When the refinery at Ras Tanura was being built, a low hill was leveled by bulldozers. Cutting through many ancient graves they turned up a stone diving weight among the numerous bones and pottery. Between Jubail and Ras Tanura, several more ancient shell heaps have been located high on the beach. Some of these are composed *entirely* of the large plate-sized species of pearl oysters; now this species is found only occasionally.

MARKETING AND DIVISION OF PROFITS

228 437 The majority of pearls are sold to Bombay merchants, but frequently brokers in search of a bargain will buy the best before

[22] Ibid., p. 42.

4:Lebkicher et al U-3 (no date)1952 MJl Saudi Arabia MJl
Maritime Arabs MK2

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Typical date palm garden in the oasis town of Hofuf.

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Unknown burial mounds dating back to ancient times near Awali—Bahrein Island.

Pearl diver with nose-clip preparing to dive beside a pearling dhow.

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